



imhe INFO

Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education

April 2007

The unique OECD international forum designed for higher education institutions
To become a member: www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/join

Inside

- Regional Engagement: the Future for Higher Education?
- IMHE News
- Publications of interest
- IMHE calendar

REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT: THE FUTURE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION?

For more information and concrete examples,
please visit the online IMHE Info www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/newsletter

IMHE, working in collaboration with other OECD Directorates, has conducted a comparative review of how issues relating to higher education institutions (HEIs) and their regional engagement are addressed in OECD countries. The project entitled "*Supporting the Contribution of Higher Education Institutions to Regional Development*" looked for innovative solutions on how to manage the regional interface.

IMHE launched the project in the spring of 2004 as a response to a wide range of initiatives across OECD countries to mobilise higher education in support of regional development. It set out to find answers to the following questions: What is higher education's regional engagement all about? What are its drivers and barriers? What does it mean for the governance and management of higher education institutions, for regions and for nations? And how does regional engagement fit with the pursuit of world-class academic excellence?

One of the biggest projects in the history of IMHE is now coming to an end. 14 regions in 12 countries have been reviewed. The final report drawing from the experience of the regions and OECD territorial reviews will be published in September in a high-level policy conference in Valencia. What have we learned? What are the pointers for the future? And has anything changed in the regions?

Constraints and challenges

Most OECD countries have witnessed a policy shift from giving state aid to disadvantaged regions to supporting indigenous development through skills, entrepreneurialism and innovation. Concepts such as "industrial clusters" and "learning regions" imply that the knowledge and learning infrastructure of a region is pivotal. Policy responses which first focused on enhancing the capacity for technological innovation have now widened to include social and organisational innovation.

Higher education (HE) in some OECD countries is characterised by administrative-based systems that leave little room for autonomy and flexibility to decide on inputs and outputs. Ministries of Education often act as champions of the role of higher education and research in meeting national and international aspirations. Although engagement with business and the community has been recognised and laid upon HEIs as a "duty", it has remained a "third task", not linked to research and teaching.

Current funding and incentive structures do not sufficiently support the regional engagement of HEIs: research is funded on

a geographically neutral basis and funding for teaching is not oriented towards building human capital in deprived regions. Again, structures with HEIs offer limited incentives or resources to staff to pursue activities that serve the local region. The appropriate metrics in the regional domain are also underdeveloped.

Regions in Spotlight

Australia:	Sunshine-Fraser Coast
Brazil:	Northern Paraná
Canada:	Atlantic Canada
Denmark:	Jutland-Funen
Denmark/Sweden:	Øresund
Finland:	Jyväskylä region
Mexico:	State of Nuevo León
The Netherlands:	Twente
Norway:	Trøndelag, the Mid-Norwegian region
Korea:	Busan metropolitan area
Spain:	The autonomous region of Valencia & the Canary Islands
Sweden:	Värmland
United Kingdom:	North East England

Tying down the global with the local

Higher education can help cities and regions become globally competitive. Globalisation and localisation are making the local availability of knowledge and skills increasingly important. But HEIs also need their regions. This is how **John Goddard**, the academic leader of the review project, sees the situation:

"All HEIs and regions cannot compete successfully on equal terms on the global stage. The global competition in higher education is headed by the wealthiest US research universities. For them, regional engagement may be irrelevant, but for those in the second tier the regional support for their global aspirations may be essential. HEIs need to mobilise regional support and remain attractive institutions to top-flight academics. To achieve this, they need to reconcile the tensions between two rationalities: the HE rationality of detachment, and the science and technology-driven rationality of close interaction with business and the community."

"Recently, Trondheim in Norway became "Europe's search capital" when Google, Yahoo and a few smaller start-ups established their R&D departments there. This could not have happened without the skilled labour in the search community in Trondheim and the proximity of the Norwegian University of Technology which, for years, has focused its research in this field and continues to train highly-skilled graduates."

Steve Garlick from Australia has been one of the key people in the IMHE reviews. He has participated in five reviews as a lead evaluator, international expert and regional coordinator. Steve has more than 20 years' expertise in regional development as a policy developer and ministerial adviser, programme manager, regional practitioner, and researcher. In his spare time he is the president of a large Australian native animal caring organisation and, with his wife, cares for injured and orphaned wild life on their property near Canberra.



Have the regions gained from the process?

The OECD project aimed to enhance partnership building in the regions. The HEIs which participated in the review have reported a number of improvements springing from the review project. They include: closer participation of HEIs in the regional strategy process and implementation, generation of new funding streams from the local businesses, stronger branding for the HEI(s) and the region, and greater impact on national policy. This is how **Per Fredriksson**, the Director of University Outreach of Karlstad University and the Regional Coordinator of the Värmland review, sees the situation:

"The process takes time, but somehow we have managed to develop a common understanding of the way forward for the region. For the first time in many years also, business creation in Värmland is positive. The reason for this can probably be debated (for ever...), but it is encouraging for all stakeholders in our joint process! What is quite clear is that the OECD review will be a cornerstone in renewing the Regional Growth Plan and work linked to the EU Structural Fund Program. We had a "re-start" last December when we organised a seminar for the newly-elected political officials."

No one-size-fits-all solutions

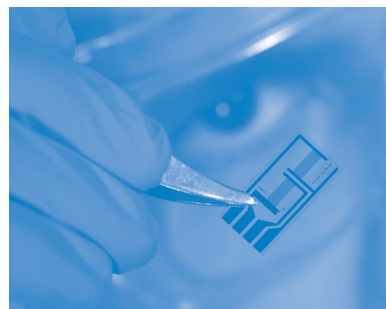
The review does not provide one-size-fits-all solutions. The final report will however point out important general issues that need to be considered by HEIs, their local and regional stakeholders and the national governments. The review also aimed to identify good practice and policy and to disseminate this information. Initiatives to promote the "third task" of serving the community are often not well integrated within the teaching and research functions that remain at the heart of the HEIs. It seems that some styles of learning and teaching are well geared to support regional development. In Aalborg University, Denmark, up to 50% of the study work consists in problem-oriented project work: students work in teams to solve problem areas which have often been defined in co-operation with firms, organisations and

public institutions. At any one time there are 2000 to 3000 ongoing projects that ensure the university's engagement with the surrounding society.

HEIs and business innovation

HEIs can contribute to regional business innovation for example in four ways: they can contribute to the creation of a new industrial base via new business creation, they can upgrade the products, processes and services of established businesses via consultancy and advisory services, they can also diversify businesses into new sectors by the introduction of new products derived from research and, finally, help attract inward investment to the region by the skill base in local higher education institutions.

Creation of new businesses in knowledge-based industries is a way of diversifying a regional economy. The greatest gains can, however, arise from improving the competitiveness of existing businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises which dominate most regional economies. SMEs have great difficulties in working with HEIs. First steps need to be minor, helping with a solution to business or technology problems and subsequently



moving the company into more innovative product/process/service development. To open the "black box" of HE, different types of entry points have been created in the regions. One of the oldest is Knowledge House.

> For more information on the Knowledge House:
www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/newsletter

Most local industry links with higher education institutions, particularly with research-based universities, are on high technology sectors. The Castellan province of the autonomous region of



Valencia in Spain provides an interesting example of a new university working together with traditional industry and SMEs. This co-operation has transformed the region into a global leader by improving the absorptive capacity of the region's SME base.

> For more information on the Castellan province:
www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/newsletter

Review reports and more information are available on the web: www.oecd.org/edu/higher/regionaldevelopment

Conference: Conference Globally Competitive, Locally Engaged – Higher Education and Regions

19-21 Sep 2007, Valencia www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/valencia

The IMHE project will come to an end in September. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and Fundación CYD Spain have supported the project. The Ministry of Human Resources and Development in Korea and the City of Turku in Finland have also supported the project through secondments. The participants were not only HEIs, but also their regions including public authorities which are responsible for territorial and HE development at the national and regional scale. The selection included 14 regions: nine from Europe, one from Latin America, two from Asia-Pacific and from North America. The regions ranged from rural to metropolitan and from peripheral to central. The higher education institutions were research-intensive, but also vocational and professionally oriented institutions. At the national level, the review embraced highly centralised as well as devolved governance systems.

IMHE NEWS

The IMHE welcomes the following new members:

- > The University of the Sunshine Coast – Australia
- > Unity University College – Ethiopia
- > UHI Millennium Institute – United Kingdom

IMHE INFO SURVEY RESULTS

We have received 147 responses to the survey. The results demonstrate overall satisfaction while pointing out several avenues for improvement, which we will try to follow. Once again, we thank you for participating in the survey.

The results are available at www.oecd.org/edu/imheinfosurvey

NOTES FROM AUSTRALIA

IMHE President Marijk van der Wende travelled to Australia where she was a key note speaker at a symposium on International Trends in University Rankings and Classifications at Griffith University and presented academic seminars at the University of Melbourne and Monash University.

A lively higher education sector

"Australia is known for its lively higher education sector and debate. Current issues include (as is the case in many other countries) the relevance and impact of global university rankings. IMHE's views on the importance of both transparency and diversity of mission in dynamic higher education systems, as well as the main conclusions from the Bonn (December 2006) conference – i.e. that rankings should be produced within defined groups of comparable institutions (classification) in order to avoid adverse effects on diversity –, were found coherent with the wider discussion. As in earlier seminars in Europe, great criticism was voiced over the Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) World University Ranking. Several Vice Chancellors and experts convincingly argued against the methodological underpinnings and the resulting position of various institutions in the ranking table – in certain cases deemed to be too high! The

Shanghai Jiaotong Academic Ranking of World Universities was perceived with much more respect as explanations of its methodology were transparent and demonstrated academic integrity. Debates with its designer on issues of concern and further improvement were open and constructive. Yet, approaches such as the German CHE model were felt to be important avenues towards better information for students and the idea that the OECD would try to develop a PISA-type methodology in order to better understand quality in terms of learning outcomes was met with great interest.

Universities are responding to the changing environment

The visit to the University of Western Sydney provided a good illustration of how universities are responding to the changing environment. Vice Chancellor Janice Reid (IMHE Governing Board member) felt that the university had benefited from its first review by the new quality assurance agency (AUQA) from which it came out rather well and feels confident regarding the implementation of the new Research Quality Framework (RQF) as the university has already sharply focused its research efforts in areas highly relevant to its regional mission and local commitments. UWS also undertook a significant

restructuring of its overseas operations, cutting 43 programmes back to seven.

More generally, Australian higher education seems to be engaged in in-depth evaluation and reflection on more than a decade of experience with off-shore education and related challenges and benefits. In addition, concerns over language abilities of foreign on-campus students are also leading to debate, both in public as well as in the sector itself. Quality will be a critical factor in the development of further strategies which, even more than before, will build on opportunities to create stronger international dimensions (including foreign language learning) in the domestic curriculum and on-campus experience for Australian students, and to advance global profile by extending the international post-

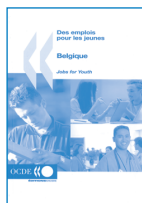


Janice Reid and Marijk van der Wende.

graduate and research portfolio. Strong cooperation with countries in the wider region (e.g. China) with fast growing R&D investments may create good opportunities for Australian research universities to enhance their international research funding environment.

The fact that the international orientation of Australian higher education is growing is also demonstrated by the remarkable focus on developments in Europe. The Bologna process has led to government responses and has inspired curricular reform at the institutional level. A project on the development of an Australian version of the International Diploma Supplement has been launched recently by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST



Des emplois pour les jeunes : Belgique,
OECD Publishing, ISBN: 9264030425
(in French only)

As unemployment continues to rise among young people, their first access to the labour market remains a major issue in OECD countries. Therefore, the OECD launched a series of reports in 15 countries, including Belgium. Each report identifies the main obstacles to youth employment and evaluates the relevance and efficiency of existing policy devices which aim to facilitate transition from school to work. The reports also provide an array of policy recommendations that governments and social partners should adopt.



**Higher Education Management and Policy:
Volume 18 Issue 3**,

OECD Publishing, ISSN 16823451

Previously published as *Higher Education Management*, *Higher Education Management and Policy*, edited by the OECD's *Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education*

(IMHE) addresses administrators and managers of higher education institutions as well as researchers in the field of institutional management. It covers the field through articles and reports on such issues as quality assurance, human resources, funding, and internationalisation. It is also a source of information on activities and events organised by OECD's IMHE Programme.



The Virtual University,

edited by Susan d'Antoni, UNESCO.

ISBN 978-92-3-104026-9

E-learning and the virtual university are examples of the use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a teaching and learning approach and an organizational structure. Both raise issues associated with the phenomenon of cross-border education.


This publication explored the related ICT policy, planning and management implications of several new or reorganized institutions of higher education. Eight case studies from different regions and representing various institutional models tell the story of their development and relate what they have learned.

IMHE CALENDAR


25-27 April

Rethinking North America: Higher Education, Regional Identities and Global Challenges, CONAHEC's 11th Conference, with the support of IMHE, Quebec, Canada.
www.conahec.org/conahec/Conferences


25-27 June

Higher Education in the 21st Century – Diversity of Missions, IMHE, DIT conference, Dublin, Ireland
 www.heconference.dit.ie/

3-4 September

Supporting Success and Productivity: Practical Tools for Making your University a Great Place to Work, "What works" conference, University of Cambridge, Harvard University, Universitas 21 and IMHE, Paris, France.
 www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/whatworks2007

19-21 September

Globally Competitive, Locally Engaged : Higher Education and Regions, International conference, Valencia, Spain.
 www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/valencia

OTHER MEETINGS OF INTEREST

12-15 September

19th Annual EAIE Conference, Trondheim, Norway.
www.eaie.org

23-25 September

Lifelong Learning in the City-Region in Pecs, Hungary
www.pascal2007.conf.pte.hu/index.htm

7-9 November

ICT, Transparency and Corporate Responsibility: Social and Ethical Considerations in the Global Economy, Lisbon, Portugal
www.cmu.edu/transparency2007/



Address change?

Please inform IMHE.

If you would like to receive this newsletter by e-mail, please send your e-mail address to imhe@oecd.org.

IMHE-Info is published in English and French by the OECD Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE). Excerpts from this newsletter may be reproduced with full reference. Please send inquiries, comments and items to be considered for publication to:

Valérie Lafon, Editor IMHE Programme, OECD
2, rue André-Pascal
75775 Paris Cedex 16 – France
Tel: (33) 1 45 24 92 24 or (33) 1 45 24 75 84
Fax: (33) 1 44 30 61 76
imhe@oecd.org
www.oecd.org/edu/imhe

Find all our meetings on
www.oecd.org/edu/imhemeetings